



Literature Review on Job Burnout among University Teachers

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Abstract. Job burnout, as a psychological state, broadly affects the career of teachers, especially in the field of higher education. The job satisfaction and level of job burnout among teachers are interrelated; good job satisfaction can reduce job burnout, whereas job burnout may lead to decreased work efficiency and increased turnover rates.

Keywords: Higher education; Teachers; Job burnout

1 Introduction

The job burnout of university teachers has adverse effects on their personal lives, students, institutions, and even the sustainable development of society. Burnt-out teachers often exhibit apathy towards their work, leading to diminished effectiveness in classroom instruction [2]. Job burnout not only affects the stability of teaching teams but also lowers the quality of teaching and research in universities, negatively impacting the motivation mechanisms that support national strategic reforms. Enhancing the overall competence of the teaching workforce is not only directly related to the quality and level of higher education but also a fundamental requirement for implementing the strategy of revitalizing the country through science and education. Moreover, the sense of job burnout among teachers is negatively correlated with students' learning motivation and academic performance, indicating that teachers' emotional states significantly affect students' learning outcomes. Therefore, maintaining teachers' enthusiasm and positivity in teaching is an important guarantee for enhancing educational quality [1].

Regarding the definition of job burnout, Cherniss (1980) posited that work can induce changes in an individual's emotions; when an individual consistently experiences negative feelings during work, job burnout arises [3]. Lee and Ashforth (1996) proposed that job burnout manifests as an individual's indifferent attitude towards work, treating it with negative behaviors and emotions, and consider job burnout as a state where work demands exceed the worker's capabilities [4]. Individuals facing prolonged work-related stress may exhibit emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low self-accomplishment [5]. These characteristics have a significant impact on the teaching effectiveness and career development of university teachers. Research indi

cates that the occurrence of job burnout is not only related to personal traits but also influenced by the work environment, workplace support, and socio-cultural contexts [6]. We will explore the influencing factors from the perspectives of individual, organizational, and social aspects.

2 Influencing Ure Factors

2.1 Individual Factors

2.1.1 Personality Traits.

Generally, an individual's response to stress arises from the interaction between the stressors experienced and their personality characteristics. Numerous studies have found that certain personality traits make individuals more susceptible to emotional exhaustion [7]. These traits include unrealistic ideals and expectations, low self-esteem and self-assessment, lack of confidence, and inaccuracies in self-perception and objective evaluation. Teachers typically possess a spirit of helping others, sincerely caring for others, and are often idealistic. They tend to have higher self-esteem, potentially setting overly idealized or unrealistic goals, leading to frustration when they fail to achieve these objectives, ultimately resulting in a state of burnout [8].

2.1.2 Physiological Characteristics.

Personal attributes such as age, gender, and years of service also influence teachers' job burnout. For instance, studies have shown that female teachers often exhibit more pronounced signs of job burnout, which may be related to societal expectations and role assumptions [9]. The physiological characteristics of women are affected by endocrine changes associated with menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause, resulting in differences in autonomic nervous system stability compared to men. This disparity makes women more prone to feelings of inferiority, depression, and emotional sensitivity, often unconsciously adopting the notion of "men are strong and women are weak," pouring much of their energy into familial roles, which exacerbates disadvantages in their career development and even leads to the belief that "doing well is not as good as marrying well" [10].

2.1.3 High Achievement Orientation.

Teachers often lack a sense of achievement in their professional accomplishments. The results of teachers' labor manifest over long periods, unlike workers who can see the fruits of their production in a short time, generating a sense of accomplishment; the "product" of a teacher's work only materializes years later and is still a collective outcome, leading to a lack of achievement experience for individual teachers [11].

2.2 Organizational Factors

2.2.1 Work Pressure.

Teachers generally report feeling overwhelmed by the multiple role pressures arising from teaching, research, and administrative functions, resulting in high workloads and consequently job burnout. Moreover, the lack of time management and work-life balance exacerbates teachers' feelings of professional fatigue [12].

2.2.2 Social Support.

Research indicates that a lack of support from colleagues and management intensifies teachers' feelings of isolation and increases the risk of job burnout [13]. Conversely, when teachers perceive ample social support, their levels of job burnout tend to be lower.

2.2.3 Management Mechanisms.

Li Yongxin, Zhang Kuo, and Zhao Guoxiang (2005) proposed that a substantial body of research evidence suggests a close connection between the lack of social support and job burnout, with the lack of support from management being particularly serious, its impacts even exceeding that of colleagues' support [14]. In other words, university teachers facing job burnout require more understanding and support from the mid- to high-level management within their institutions, accompanied by corresponding improvement measures to alleviate various pressures [15]. Support from management can stimulate teachers' resonance and sense of identity, enhancing their loyalty and encouraging them to actively feedback on their work status. This not only helps managers make more informed decisions but also plays a crucial role in improving the overall teaching system of the university.

2.2.4 Administrative Bureaucracy.

In their research, Ren Meina et al. conducted an in-depth analysis of the bureaucratic phenomenon in higher education institutions and its impact on faculty members. They approached the issue from the perspective of performance evaluation, indicating that the hierarchical management model in universities exacerbates time pressure and anxiety, and the contradiction between the singular quantitative evaluation standard's inherent bureaucratic logic and the academic logic is, in fact, a significant root cause of teachers' job burnout [16].

2.3 Societal Factors

2.3.1 Social Expectations.

The expectations of society for teachers are excessively high. The success or failure of education directly impacts the development of future society; thus, various sectors of society pay close attention to the quality of teachers' work, setting high demands and expectations for them, even reaching the point of "the omnipotence of education" [17].

Consequently, teachers experience a strong sense of occupational pressure, and any contradictions arising in educational activities can lead to job burnout.

2.3.2 Mental and Material Support.

The income situation of university teachers is generally disproportionate to the work intensity they endure. Although university teachers typically have periodic vacations, a survey by Lackritz (2004) indicates that the effect of vacations on alleviating work burnout is very limited [18]. Furthermore, research by Jones and Westman (1998) and Westman & Eden (1997) also argues that a short-term disengagement from work only temporarily alleviates feelings of burnout [19]. There are various factors influencing occupational burnout among university teachers, including work environment, management model, career development opportunities, and personal traits. Work pressure, social support, and teachers' sense of achievement are all significant variables impacting occupational burnout. In addition to external factors, teachers' intrinsic motivation, professional identity, and emotional regulation abilities also play a crucial role in the development of burnout.

3 Countermeasure Research

Strategies for coping with occupational burnout among university teachers can be explored from both individual and organizational levels. From the individual perspective, teachers can alleviate stress through psychological adjustment and self-management. At the organizational level, schools should establish more humane management systems, provide better professional development support, and create a positive working environment. On one hand, schools should provide a more humane working environment and enhance mental health support to help teachers relieve stress. On the other hand, teachers themselves need to improve their emotional regulation abilities and professional identity to resist the onset of burnout.

4 Conclusions

Recent studies show that research on teacher occupational burnout is developing towards a more comprehensive direction, with scholars beginning to focus on the influence of social factors, psychological resilience, and others on occupational burnout. Through big data analysis and systematic surveys, future research will be able to reveal in greater depth the complex causes and dynamic changes of occupational burnout. The issue of occupational burnout among university teachers not only affects individual teachers' work efficiency and well-being but also has a profound impact on educational quality. Understanding the multidimensional influencing factors of burnout and adopting effective coping strategies can provide effective guarantees for improving job satisfaction among university teachers. As research on this topic deepens, future discussions should further focus on the interaction between individuals and organizations,

as well as how to establish more durable support mechanisms within the complex educational system.

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